

Continuing education

Continuing education (similar to **further education** in the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland**) is an all-encompassing term within a broad list of post-secondary learning activities and programs. The term is used mainly in the United States and parts of Canada. Recognized forms of post-secondary learning activities within the domain include: degree credit courses by **non-traditional students**, non-degree career training, workforce training, formal personal enrichment courses (both on-campus and online) self-directed learning (such as through Internet interest groups, clubs or personal research activities) and experiential learning as applied to **problem solving**.

1 General

General continuing education is similar to **adult education**, at least in being intended for adult learners, especially those beyond traditional **undergraduate college** or **university** age. However, it is not normally considered to include basic instruction such as **literacy**, **English language** skills, or programs such as **vocational training** or **GED** preparation. Instead, as the term suggests, it is assumed that the student already has a college education and is simply continuing it.

Frequently, in the **United States**, continuing education involves enrollment in college/university credit-granting courses, often by students enrolled part-time, and often offered through a division or school of continuing education of a college/university known sometimes as the **university extension** or **extension school**. Also frequently in the US, it can mean enrollment in non-credit-granting courses, often taken for personal, non-vocational enrichment (although many non-credit courses can also have a vocational function). Also, in the US, many such non-credit courses are offered by **community colleges**.

2 History

The **Chautauqua Institution**, originally the Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly, was founded in 1874 “as an educational experiment in out-of-school, vacation learning. It was successful and broadened almost immediately beyond courses for Sunday school teachers to include academic subjects, music, art and physical education.”^[1] **Cornell University** was among higher education institutions that began offering university-based continuing education, primarily to teachers, through ex-

tension courses in the 1870s. As noted in the *Cornell Era* of February 16, 1877, the university offered a “Tour of the Great Lakes” program for “teachers and others” under the direction of Professor **Theodore B. Comstock**, head of Cornell’s department of geology.^[2] The **University of Wisconsin–Madison** began its continuing education program in 1907.^{[3][4]} The **New School for Social Research**, founded in 1919, was initially devoted to adult education.^[5] In 1969, **Empire State College**, a unit of the **State University of New York**, was the first institution in the US to exclusively focus on providing **higher education** to adult learners. In 1976 the **University of Florida** created its own **Division of Continuing Education** and most courses were offered on evenings or weekends to accommodate the schedules of working students.^[6]

In the spring of 2009, **Eduventures**, a higher education consulting firm, released the results of a study that illustrated that the recession had made a significant impact on the views of prospective continuing education students. A survey of 1,500 adults who planned to enroll in a course or program within the next two years determined that while nearly half of respondents believed that the value of education had risen due to the recession, over two-thirds said the state of the economy had affected their plans to pursue continuing education.^[7]

3 For professionals

Main articles: **Professional development** and **Continuing professional development**

Within the domain of continuing education, professional continuing education is a specific learning activity generally characterized by the issuance of a certificate or **continuing education units** (CEU) for the purpose of documenting attendance at a designated seminar or course of instruction. **Licensing** bodies in a number of fields (such as teaching and healthcare) impose continuing education requirements on members who hold licenses to continue practicing a particular profession. These requirements are intended to encourage professionals to expand their foundations of knowledge and stay up-to-date on new developments. Depending on the field, these requirements may be satisfied through college or university coursework, extension courses or conferences and seminars attendance. Although individual professions may have different standards, the most widely accepted standard, developed by the International Association for Con-

tinuing Education & Training, is that ten contact hours equals one Continuing Education Unit.^[8] Not all professionals use the CEU convention. For example, the American Psychological Association accredits sponsors of continuing education such as PsychContinuingEd.com and uses simply a CE approach. In contrast to the CEU, the CE credit is typically one CE credit for each hour of contact.

4 Method and format

The method of delivery of continuing education can include traditional types of classroom lectures and laboratories. However, many continuing education programs make heavy use of [distance learning](#), which not only includes independent study, but can also include [videotaped/CD-ROM material](#), [broadcast programming](#) or [Online Education](#) which has more recently dominated the distance learning community. Many universities such as [Southern New Hampshire University](#) and [University College University of Denver](#), have begun to offer hybrid courses. These courses offer adult learners the option of having in-classroom and online learning.^[9] Online courses have brought the possibility of obtaining an affordable college education to many of those of to whom it was previously out of reach.

In addition to independent study, the use of conference-type group study, which can include study networks (which can, in many instances, meet together online) as well as different types of seminars/workshops, can be used to facilitate learning. A combination of traditional, distance, and conference-type study, or two of these three methods, may be used for a particular continuing education course or program.

5 See also

- [Continuing education unit](#)
- [Continuing legal education](#)
- [Continuing medical education](#)
- [Community education](#)
- [Dual enrollment](#)
- [E-learning](#)
- [Independent scholar](#)
- [Lifelong learning](#)
- [National Council of Labour Colleges](#)
- [Workers' Educational Association in Australia and the UK](#)

6 References

- [1]
- [2] "Cornell Era 1875-1876, February 16, 1877, p.131".
- [3] Schugurensky, Daniel. "1907: The 'Wisconsin Idea' Brings the University to the Community". *History of Education: Selected Moments of the 20th Century*. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Retrieved 2009-03-01.
- [4] UW–Extension Chancellor's Office. "Highlight History of Extension in Wisconsin 1862 to 1999". *About Us*. The University of Wisconsin–Extension. Retrieved 2009-03-01. Archived May 29, 2010, at the [Wayback Machine](#).
- [5] [New School Archives: Course Catalogs](#)
- [6] [UF Division of Continuing Education](#)
- [7] [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), April 2, 2009
- [8] "The IACET Standard: Continuing Education Units (CEUs)". International Association for Continuing Education and Training. Retrieved 2008-11-13.
- [9] "Adult Learners". *Continuing Education*. Southern New Hampshire University. Retrieved 2011. Check date values in: |access-date= (help)

7 Further reading

- Crimaldi, Laura, "Older residents follow Pathway to college", [Boston Herald](#), Sunday, January 4, 2009. About students successes in the *College Pathways* program at ABCD Learning Works in [Boston](#), Massachusetts.
- Rogers, Alan, "Non-formal Education: Flexible Schooling Or Participatory Education?", Springer, 2005. ISBN 0-387-24636-3

8 External links

- [University Professional and Continuing Education Association](#)
- [International Association for Continuing Education & Training](#)
- [Association for Continuing Higher Education](#)
- [American Association for Adult and Continuing Education](#)
- [Canadian Association for University Continuing Education](#)
- [Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education](#) contains many researched articles about the field, in French and English.

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